

In the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

49. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,
- (d) a passage connecting the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet ~~in fluid flow communication with~~ and the second stage cyclone inlets, and the passage is configured to inhibit settling out of particulate matter from the air stream.

50. – 57 (Previously Added)

58. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,

(d) a passage extending from connecting the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet ~~to~~ ~~in fluid flow communication with~~ the second stage cyclone inlets, and the passage is substantially free of any dead air spaces.

59. –65 (Previously Added)

66. (Currently Amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:

- (a) a dirty air inlet and a source of suction to draw air containing particulate matter into the dirty air inlet and produce an air stream in the vacuum cleaner;
- (b) a first cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a cyclone having a first cyclonic cleaning stage inlet and a first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet;
- (c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage positioned in series with the first cyclonic cleaning stage, the second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of second stage cyclones, each of the second stage cyclones having a second stage cyclone inlet and a second stage cyclone outlet; and,
- (d) a conduit extending from connecting the first cyclonic cleaning stage outlet ~~to~~ ~~in fluid flow communication with~~ the second stage cyclone inlets.

67 - 73 (Previously Added)